

Tip 8: Choose Recyclable Products and Containers and Recycle Them



When you've done all you can to avoid waste, recycle. Producing goods from recycled materials typically consumes less energy and conserves raw materials. Yet, our landfills are packed with many packages and products that can be recycled.



Consider products made of materials that are collected for recycling locally; in many communities, this includes glass, aluminum, steel, some paper and cardboard, and certain plastics. Check with appropriate community officials, volunteer groups, or recycling businesses to determine what materials are collected for recycling. If a system is not in place to return a certain type of material, that material is not easily "recyclable."

Participate in community recycling drives, curbside programs, and drop-off collections. Call community officials, the local recycling center, or a nearby recycling business to find out if and how materials should be separated. For example, some communities require that glossy inserts be segregated from newspaper, and that different types of cans be separated. A magnet can be used to distinguish steel or bimetal cans from aluminum cans (a magnet does not stick to aluminum). Also, investigate curbside pickup schedules, determine what materials are accepted, locate drop-off sites, and find out when these sites are open.

If a recycling program does not exist in your community, participate in establishing one. Call local salvage operators to see if they will accept or pick up materials for recycling. Work with community officials to determine the most cost-effective recycling options for your area.

Take used car batteries ("lead-acid batteries"), antifreeze, and motor oil (saved in clean nonbreakable containers) to participating automobile service centers and other places that collect these items for recycling.

As more businesses and organizations provide collection opportunities, take advantage of them. For example, many grocery stores collect bags for recycling.